

TRUST MATTERS



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Millions of Dollars Locked Up

The centralized commercial lockbox was established by the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) in 2005 to receive payments, both electronically and by paper checks, for the use of Indian land and resources. Previously checks were received at over 100 Bureau of Indian Affairs regional and agency sites.

During fiscal year 2009, a total of \$520.8 million flowed through OST's lockbox. Approximately 76.75 percent of funds received were distributed to tribal and individual Indian beneficiaries within **two days** of receipt.

Recently, OST awarded a new lockbox contract for the period of fiscal years 2010 through 2014. For more information about the lockbox function, contact your Fiduciary Trust Officer (FTO). Go to www.doi.gov/ost/fto to access your FTO's contact information.

Fractionation Update

Fractionation is an issue of major importance. Bureau of Indian Affairs Director Jerry Gidner along with Principal Deputy Special Trustee Donna Erwin are executive sponsors of a team to explore a comprehensive approach to fractionation.

Additionally, the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians continues to address the Whereabouts Unknown (WAU) matter, which complicates the issue of fractionation. WAU accounts do not have current addresses, which impedes contacting landowners regarding management of land interests. A list of names of owners of WAU accounts is available at www.doi.gov/ost/wau.

Suggestions from tribes and individual landowners are always welcome. Contact the Trust Beneficiary Call Center (TBCC), toll free, at 1-888-678-6836. TBCC is open Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. to noon, Mountain time.

Tribal Access to TFAS Accounts

Technology has been restored that allows tribes to access their Trust Fund Accounting System (TFAS) accounts using StrataWeb, an Internet based product. This gives approved personnel the ability to look at secure tribal account information.

Tribal authorities determine who will have access and which tribal accounts they will be allowed to view. The Fiduciary Trust Officer (FTO) completes the applicable form, which is reviewed and signed by the Regional Trust Administrator. Authorized users can review investments, holdings and transactions for the accounts to which they are granted access.

Contact your FTO about setting up access. Visit www.doi.gov/ost/fto for the complete list of FTOs.

Palm Springs' Grand Opening Ceremony Coincides with NCAI Annual Convention



It was a fast-paced week in Palm Springs when the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) came to town for its 66th annual convention, October 11-16, 2009. On Tuesday of that week, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) Palm Springs offices were officially opened. The layout of the new space supports the timely delivery of beneficiary services.

Pat Gerard (left), of OST's Principal Deputy Special Trustee's office, provided remarks at the grand opening ceremony of the office space. Other speakers at the event included Larry Echo Hawk, the Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs; Richard Milanovich (right), Chairman of the Agua

Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians; Jerry Gidner, Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA); Dale Morris, Regional Director of the BIA; and Kim Snyder, BIA Superintendent for the Palm Springs Agency. Chairman Milanovich also chairs the Special Trustee's Advisory Board.

The NCAI convention had many highlights. The national officers for the coming year were elected with Jefferson Keel (Chickasaw), the former NCAI First Vice President, voted in as President. On Monday, October 12, the formal announcement by the White House of the November 5 Tribal Nations Conference heightened the excitement.



Chris Larson, Fiduciary Trust Officer of the Palm Springs and Southern California Agencies, and staff members from both agencies (below: Trust Account Manager Hermione Laborin, Southern California Agency) offered information at the OST booth. Working with BIA personnel, they held special "Ask the Expert" sessions each afternoon, from Tuesday through Thursday. OST staff and management look forward to an enhanced presence at the 2010 NCAI convention that will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico.



FY09 Audit and Accomplishments

The fiscal year 2009 third party audit of the Trust Financial Statements for Tribal and Other Trust Funds and Individual Indian Money Trust Funds has been posted on the website at www.doi.gov/ost/documents/audits. For the first time since the audits have been performed (1996), there are no material weaknesses.

The annual audit is prefaced by a letter from Acting Special Trustee Donna Erwin. The letter lists a few significant accomplishments of the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) in fiscal year 2009. For example, OST implemented *Check 21*, which electronically clears checks from lessees, and tribes were provided online account access.

Please contact your Fiduciary Trust Officer (FTO) if you have questions about the audit. FTOs can be located online at www.doi.gov/ost/fto.

Financial Skills for *All* Ages

Across the country, Fiduciary Trust Officers (FTOs) are supporting financial skills training for interested tribal members and tribal employees. Topics include balancing checkbooks, applying for credit, reading a credit report, budgeting, investing and planning for the future.

There is a special effort to offer this training to minors approaching the age of majority and to elders. Minors will learn to handle income to build wealth. The training will help elders with the special challenge of managing resources they may consider leaving to their heirs.

The training materials were developed by Oweesta, a certified Native community development financial institution, and First Nations Development Institute (FNDI), which works to strengthen American Indian economies through a strategy of education, advocacy and capitalization. The training materials are suitable for individuals at all levels of experience with cultural and traditional components designed specifically for Indian country.

To date, the training has been provided at many schools and tribal offices and centers. Ask your FTO if financial skills training is available where you are. Go to www.doi.gov/ost/fto to locate your FTO.



Financial skills train-the-trainer class held at the National Indian Programs Training Center in May 2009 for OST's FTOs (standing, FTO Ed Grant). Training was conducted by FNDI and Oweesta instructors.

President Barack Obama takes questions from audience at the opening of the Tribal Nations Conference. (Photo credit: Tami A. Heilemann – DOI)



President Martin Asks President Obama Tribal Leaders Conference

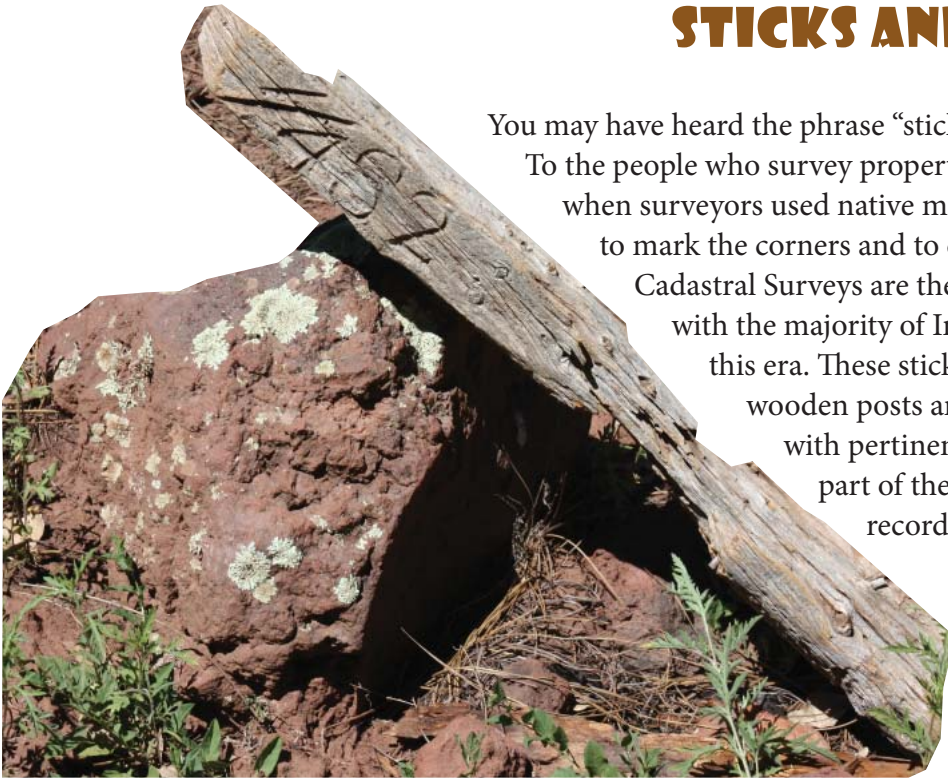
President Bill Martin, Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, attended the historic White House Tribal Leaders Conference on November 5, 2009. After President Obama's opening remarks, President Martin was one of the first in the audience to ask a question. His question reflected his knowledge of basic issues facing all of Alaska's tribes.

But what stood out for President Martin was the honor of the opportunity he had that day. He was impressed by the absolute focus President Obama gave each person who addressed him. As President Martin looked up from his notes while phrasing his question, he looked right into the eyes of the President of the United States; he had his full attention. It was a defining moment. That look spoke volumes about respect, sovereign rights, and intent.

Later, as departing President Obama shook hands with some attendees, he took President Martin's hand and said directly to him, "Thank you for asking your question." It was a personal and yet a universal moment for President Martin, for all Native peoples of Alaska, and for American Indians.

President Martin is proud he was able to attend the conference for the Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes. He knows it was an important day. President Martin said, "It was a totally emotional time, place, setting. A tremendous feeling came over me that, my gosh, it's going to happen this time." He added, "And it wasn't just me; that sensation came over others too."

STICKS AND STONES



You may have heard the phrase “sticks and stones” used as a taunt. To the people who survey property, it refers to a whole era before 1910 when surveyors used native materials at hand—sticks and stones—to mark the corners and to define boundaries between properties. Cadastral Surveys are the original surveys of the United States with the majority of Indian country being surveyed within this era. These stick and stone monuments (actually wooden posts and small boulders) were inscribed with pertinent survey information and became a part of the Public Land Survey System (PLSS) record.

Since 1910, most survey monuments have been constructed out of more durable and recognizable manmade metallic material.

Above: Marker made from materials found in the vicinity where the survey monument was to be set. In the example shown, the surveyor probably cut down a small tree or cut a limb from a nearby tree, pointed the bottom, squared the top 18 to 24 inches, and marked the corner information with a timber scribe tool as specified in the *Manual of Surveying Instructions*. In 1900, the surveyor was working under the 1894 edition of the *Manual*. **Right:** Today’s surveyor will replace the wood post monument with a iron or stainless post topped with a brass cap to hold the corner markings, as specified in the *Manual of Surveying Instructions*, i.e., the 2009 edition. **Below:**

This corner monument is actually a fossilized vertebra from a sauropod. It was established at a site in Wyoming by William O. Owen, U.S. Deputy Surveyor, on April 3, 1881. He recorded it as a “petrified bone of mastodon.”



Recently, the Bureau of Land Management released the 2009 edition of the *Manual of Surveying Instructions*, which serves as the nation’s standard and guide for the PLSS. This edition is the ninth release in a series of official instructions dating back to 1804. The 2009 edition is the first addition which contains a chapter on the subdivision of section using the three-mile method unique to many American Indian lands. This edition will be available through the Public Land Survey System Foundation’s website at www.blmsurveymanual.org.

